MONOTHEISM

IN CROSS-RELIGION AND CULTURE

JAYANANTAKA

INTRODUCTION

Philosophically, the idea of "Him" as a single reality can be traced through two major paths: ontological and anthropological. The ontological path departs from the metaphysical question of existence — *is there behind everything that exists a single principle that is the cause and basis of existence itself?* The anthropological path, on the other hand, departs from human experience: *how does human consciousness in various cultures capture and interpret a reality that is considered sacred and supreme?*

In philosophy, the idea of a single supreme reality has long been a central theme of metaphysical thought. In the Greek tradition, Parmenides has affirmed that true reality is one (*to hen estin*), undivided, unchangeable. While Plato saw that everything that exists is a shadow of the *One* who is eternal in the world of ideas. This thought had a wide influence, including on the later monotheistic philosophical traditions, such as in Islam by Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina, and in Christian Neoplatonism by Plotinus and Augustine.

In Islam, this idea developed into the concept of ontological monotheism, namely that only Allah has a true form (*al-wujūd al-ḥaqq*), while all creation is only a reflection of His form. In Vedantic Hinduism, a similar principle is expressed in the term Brahman, expressed in the sentence *Ekam evadvitiyam Brahma* — "There is only One, there is no second." A corresponding point also arises in Taoism, where the Tao is understood as the source of everything that cannot be explained, but encompasses everything: *"The Tao that can be called is not the eternal Tao."*

Meanwhile, from the side of religious anthropology, thinkers such as Mircea Eliade and Clifford Geertz show that the experience of *the sacred* is an inherent part of human culture. For Eliade, religion was a manifestation of what he called *hierophany*, that is, the appearance of the Holy One in the profane world. Each culture has its own form in depicting that supreme reality — whether through myths, rites, or symbols. Geertz added that religion is a system of symbols that serves to regulate meaning, provide a model for reality, and affirm the existential order of humans. In the symbol system, the concept of "The One" becomes the center of the orientation of meaning for people's lives.

Thus, *monotheism* in the broadest sense is not merely a dogma about the number of Gods, but a universal structure of consciousness that affirms the existence of a single center of meaning and existence. In this context, the term "He" is used not as a specific personal reference (such as Allah, YHWH, or Brahman), but as a philosophical symbol for the absolute reality that man understands through various languages and cultural systems.

An anthropological perspective also helps explain the relativity of form and the absolutity of meaning. In every culture, man expresses the sacred according to his symbolic language—the form is relative, but the meaning is towards something absolute. For example, in Islam, the oneness of God is expressed in the concept *of monotheism*; in Judaism, through *the Shema of Israel*; in Christianity, through the Trinity; in Hinduism, through Brahman and the Atman; in Taoism, through the Taoist balance; in Confucianism, through Tian as a moral principle; in Shinto, through the relationship between man and *us*; and in Buddhism, through the reality of the Dharma. All of these expressions are human attempts to uncover the same reality with different vocabulary.

Philosophically, this view is close to the idea of perennial philosophy put forward by Aldous Huxley and developed by Frithjof Schuon and Seyyed Hossein Nasr. This philosophy states that all religions, though outwardly different, are based on one common metaphysical truth: that the supreme reality is single and sacred. Thus, religious diversity does not need to be understood as opposition, but rather as a symbolic variation of the same truth.

With this philosophical and anthropological foundation, the book seeks to view monotheism not as an exclusive claim of a religion, but as a phenomenon of universal human consciousness that continues to be articulated through texts, rites, and doctrines in various traditions. The "he" is understood differently because humans speak the language of their respective cultures. However, in the depth of meaning, all traditions are pointing in the same direction: to the single unspeakable reality, which is the source of all existence and the ultimate goal of every human spiritual quest.

MONOTHEISM IN ISLAM

A. The Basis of the Text and the Concept of Tawheed

The concept of monotheism in Islam is known as tawheed (*tawḥīd*), which literally means "to declare oneness" or "to impress." In Islamic theology, monotheism is not only the assertion that God is one, but also the affirmation that there is no other true form other than Allah, and that everything that exists is only a manifestation of His will and creation.

The textual foundation of this concept is very strong in the Qur'an, among others in the following verses:

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ، اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ، لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ، وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ.
(Q.S. Al-Ikhlāṣ [112]: 1–4)

Say: He is the One God. Allah is the Lord on whom all things depend. He had no children and was not begotten. And there is nothing equal to Him.

This verse is the most concise and concise formulation of the concept of Islamic monotheism. Surah Al-Ikhlāṣ is often referred to as Surah *al-Tauhid*, because it affirms the essence of Allah as the One absolutely (aḥadiyyah) — unmultiple, multi-faceted, and incomparable to creatures.

This affirmation is complemented by another sentence:

وَإِلَٰهُكُمْ إِلَٰهٌ وَاحِدٌ ۖ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَٰنُ الرَّحِيمُ.
(Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 163)

And your Lord is the One God; There is no God but Him, the Most Merciful and the Most Merciful.

And:

لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا.
(Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 22)

If there were gods in the heavens and on the earth besides Allah, they would have perished.

From these three texts, it appears that the Qur'an affirms the oneness of Allah not only numerically, but ontologically and cosmologically. God is the only source of existence and order of the cosmos; The plurality of nature does not diminish the oneness of God, for all are subject to His law.

B. Theological Dimension: Tawheed Rububiyyah, Uluhiyyah, and Asma'–Nature

Islamic theologians then elaborate on monotheism in three main dimensions:

1. Tawheed Rububiyyah — the recognition that only Allah creates, regulates, and maintains the entire universe. This affirms the oneness of Allah as *Rabb al-'ālamīn* (Lord of the universe).
2. Tawheed Uluhiyyah — the affirmation that only Allah is worthy of worship. All forms of servitude, prayer, and worship must be directed to Him alone.
3. Tawheed Asma' wa Ṣifāt — the determination of the names and attributes of Allah as mentioned in the Qur'an, without resembling them with creatures. In this context, the oneness of Allah does not mean that it is without nature, but those qualities do not stand apart from His Substance.

Scholars such as Al-Ash'ari and Al-Maturidi emphasize the balance between *tanzīh* (Allah's purification of likeness) and *tatsbīt* (determination of Allah's attributes).

Whereas among philosophers and Sufis, the discussion of monotheism develops more deeply towards the ontology of existence.

C. Dimensions of Philosophy and Sufism: A Single Form

In the perspective of Islamic philosophy, especially by Ibn Sina and Mulla Ṣadra, monotheism is understood as the principle of a single wujūd (wahdat al-wujūd) — that only Allah has a true form (*al-wujūd al-ḥaqq*), while all beings are only metaphorical forms or shadows of His reality.

Ibn Sina in *Al-Ilahiyyat min al-Syifa'* states that the existence of Allah is *wājib al-wujūd* (it must be), while everything else is only *mumkin al-wujūd* (it may be). So everything that exists depends on the existence of God as the first cause.

This thought was later mystically developed by Ibn 'Arabi, who stated that the diversity of forms is a manifestation (*tajallī*) of a single divine reality. In the view of *wahdat al-wujūd*, the entire universe is the "appearance" of Allah through His names and attributes. Ibn 'Arabi wrote:

"There is no one but God, and everything other than Him is only the forms of His being." — Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam

This view is not intended as pantheism, but rather as an ontological monotheism, in which all realities are merely reflections of a single source. In this case, man cannot understand Allah directly, but through the signs (*āyāt*) in nature and in himself, as affirmed in the Qur'an (Q.S. 41:53):

"We will show them Our signs in all horizons and in themselves, until it is clear to them that He is the righteous one."

D. Anthropological Dimension: Human as the Image of God

From the point of view of Islamic anthropology, man was created as a caliph — a representation of monotheistic consciousness on earth.
Humans have the potential to know God in two ways:

1. revelation (nash), which is direct instruction from God; and
2. fitrah, which is the innate awareness of the existence of one God.

The Qur'an (Q.S. 7:172) mentions the primordial covenant (*mīthāq al-astu*):

"Am I not your Lord?" They replied, "True."

This verse shows that the consciousness of the One is embedded in the structure of man's mind, and that all religions are essentially an attempt to reaffirm the covenant. Thus, from an anthropological perspective, monotheism is a form of human existential awareness of divine reality.

E. Philosophical Synthesis: Tawheed as a Cosmic and Epistemic Principle

Within the framework of perennial philosophy, monotheism can be understood as a universal principle that explains the order of the cosmos and the unity of knowledge.
Every law of nature, the unity of creation, and the moral order in man is a manifestation of divine

oneness. Thus, *La ilaha illa Allah* is not just an creed, but an ontology of reality itself: that there is no true essence other than God.

This realization gives birth to spiritual ethics: man must live in harmony with the principle of oneness—maintaining a balance between the world and the hereafter, between the self and the universe, between the personal will and the will of God. Thus, monotheism becomes the cosmological, epistemological, and ethical foundation in all aspects of Islamic life.

MONOTHEISM IN JEWISH

A. Textual Foundation: *Shema Yisrael* and the Principle of Oneness of YHWH

Monotheism in the Jewish tradition is centered on a statement known as *Shema Yisrael*, which was at the core of ancient Israeli theology. This text is found in the Book of Deuteronomy 6:4, and is traditionally recited daily by Jews as a declaration of faith:

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד.
Shema Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD is One. (Deuteronomy 6:4)

This verse is the theological foundation of Jewish monotheism. The word *Echad* (אֶחָד) means "one," but in a sense that is not just numerical — but a whole, exclusive, and indivisible whole. The God of Israel (YHWH) is not only one among the others, but the only one who exists in essence and the source of all existence.

The historical context shows that this statement arose in an environment of the Ancient Near East that was still polytheistic. Therefore, *the Shema* is a theological and political proclamation—rejecting all forms of other gods and affirming sole allegiance to YHWH. Thus, Jewish monotheism is a form of monotheism that evolves into pure monotheism: the recognition that only one God is worthy of worship and does indeed exist.

B. The Divine Name and the Concept of the Divine

In the Hebrew text, the God of Israel is referred to by various names that reflect aspects of His existence:

1. YHWH (יהוה) – God's unspoken holy name, often read as *Adonai* ("God"). This name is related to the root word *hayah* ("to be" or "to be"), as explained in Exodus 3:14 when God revealed Himself to Moses:

אֶהְיֶה	אֲשֶׁר	אֶהְיֶה
Ehyeh	*asher*	*Ehyeh*

"I am I" or *"I will become as I will be."*

This sentence indicates the independent and inevitable existence of God — a concept that is parallel to the idea *of wājib al-wujūd* in Islamic philosophy.

2. Elohim (אֱלֹהִים) – A plural word used to refer to God, but grammatically accompanied by a singular verb. This reflects the plural omnipotence in unity, not divine plurality, but the abundance of power in oneness.
3. El Shaddai, El Elyon, and Adonai – designations that affirm God's power, majesty, and ownership over all of creation.

In all of these terminologies, the Jewish concept of divinity emphasizes that YHWH is the source of all existence, but also has personality and will, relating to man through history, law, and covenants (*berit*).

C. Theological Dimension: Covenant and Exclusivity of the Faith

In the Jewish tradition, monotheism is not purely abstract, but is manifested through a covenant (berit) between God and the nation of Israel. The one God becomes the God of history, who leads, guides, and demands ethical obedience. This is seen in the first commandment of *the Ten Commandments (Decalogue):*

"There shall be no other God before you." (Exodus 20:3)

Thus, Jewish monotheism not only means that there is only one God, but also that there should be no double allegiance. This is ethical monotheism, in which religious allegiance is manifested through obedience to the law (Torah) and moral action.

Hebrew prophetism (the prophethood of Israel) reinforces this dimension. Prophets such as Isaiah and Hosea opposed syncretism and idolatry, calling for a return to the purity of the worship of YHWH. Isaiah 45:5 affirms:

"I am the LORD, and there is no other; except I have no God." (*Ani YHWH we-en od, zula'ti ein elohim.*Düssel

This statement is not only theological, but also cosmological: God is the creator of heaven and earth, not part of creation. Thus, Jewish monotheism forms the basis for a linear worldview—that the universe has a beginning, a purpose, and is subject to the will of one God.

D. The Dimensions of Philosophy and Mysticism: From Maimonides to the Kabbalah

In the tradition of Jewish philosophy, especially in the Middle Ages, the idea of monotheism developed through the work of Moses Maimonides (1135–1204) in his *Guide for the Perplexed*. Maimonides interprets monotheism in the framework of Aristotelian rationalism: God is the First Cause, one absolutely, without form, without composition, and without anthropomorphic attributes.

He asserts that the mention of God's attributes is only a negative predicament (*via negativa*): when man says "God is All-Knowing," he actually means "God is not stupid." Thus, monotheism becomes a form of absolute transcendence—God transcends all categories of man.

But in the Jewish mystical tradition (Kabbalah), the oneness of God is explained in a more symbolic way. The unspeakable God is called Ein Sof (אין סוף) — "The Infinite One." From Ein Sof emanates ten emanations (*sefirot*), which constitute the spiritual structure of the cosmos. Although it appears plural, all of the emanations remain one in their source.

Thus, the Kabbalah understands monotheism not simply as a rejection of many gods, but as an affirmation that all diversity comes from one infinite divine consciousness. This concept has similarities with the idea of *wahdat al-wujūd* in Islam, although the symbolic language is different.

E. Anthropological Dimension: The Covenant Nation and the Divine Image

From the point of view of religious anthropology, Jewish monotheism is manifested in the collective consciousness of the Israelites as the elect (am segulah) called to be witnesses of God's oneness among the nations. In *Genesis 1:27*, man is said to have been created *"in the image of God"* (*b'tzelem Elohim*). That is, humans contain the reflection of divine consciousness and have an ethical responsibility to creation.

Monotheism here is not only a metaphysical belief, but also a social and ethical way of life. One God demands one justice, one law, and universal morality. Thus, Jewish monotheism is theocentric and historical—God is not understood as an abstract idea, but rather as a living God in human history.

F. Philosophical Synthesis

Jewish monotheism can be understood as personal and historical monotheism: God is one, transcendent, but also immanent in history.
He creates, chooses, speaks, and guides.
The Oneness of God means the unity of moral law and historical purpose, which makes the world not an illusion, but a space for the embodiment of the divine will.

Within the framework of perennial philosophy, Jewish monotheism shows the personalistic theistic side of consciousness of the One, as distinct from non-personalistic forms (such as Brahman or Taoism). However, both are rooted in the same principle: the supreme reality that is one, indivisible, and the source of all meaning.

MONOTHEISM IN CHRISTIANITY

A. Textual Foundation: From *Shema Yisrael* to the Gospel

Monotheism in the Christian tradition is rooted in the Jewish faith. Jesus of Nazareth was born, grew up, and taught in an Israelite tradition that affirmed the absolute oneness of God. That foundation is laid down in the text of Deuteronomy 6:4, known as *Shema Yisrael*:

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD is one." (Deuteronomy 6:4)

This prayer is at the heart of Israeli theology: the recognition that there is only one God, the source of law and life. When asked about the most important law, Jesus quoted this text directly:

"Jesus answered, The first commandment is: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One; and love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." (Mark 12:29–30)

From this quotation, it appears that Jesus' monotheism is identical to Jewish monotheism, but given an ethical and relational dimension: the oneness of God is not only intellectually recognized, but lived out through love for God and neighbor. So in Christianity, monotheism does not stop at confession, but becomes an ethical call to love.

B. Monotheism of Love: From Confession to Relationship

Jesus' teachings extend the meaning of "One God" into the space of human experience. God is not just a metaphysical entity, but is present in the relationship of love that binds man and the universe. Love is the most concrete manifestation of God's oneness, because love unites the different without negating differences.
Thus, Christian monotheism can be called love monotheism—the recognition of one God who demands unity in universal love.

In early Christian theology, this view evolved into the understanding that divine love manifests itself through three relational forms: the Father (the Creator), the Son (the incarnate Word), and the Holy Spirit (the life force). However, in the early stages, this understanding has not been formulated systematically.

C. Theological History of the Concept of the Trinity: From Jesus to the Council

1. The Monotheistic Faith of the Primitive Church

The early Christian church (1–2nd centuries C.E.) held fast to Hebrew monotheism. They worship one God, but at the same time honor Jesus as the Son of God and acknowledge the work of the Holy Spirit in their midst. In New Testament texts, such as John 1:1 ("In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"), there is a seed of understanding that the Word (Logos) has a divine essence. However, the term "Trinity" is not yet known and the concept has not been formalized.

Phrases such as *"baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit"* (Matthew 28:19) indicate a triadic spiritual experience, but without the essential separation from the oneness of God.

2. Controversy and Formulation at the Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.)

In the 3rd to 4th centuries, a theological debate arose about the nature of Jesus.Arius (of Alexandria) taught that Jesus was only the supreme creation, not the true God. Athanasius rejected this view and affirmed that Christ was "one in essence with the Father" (homoousios).

Emperor Constantine then convened the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, at which Athanasius' views were accepted. From this came the Nicene Creed, which affirmed that Jesus was "the God of God, the Light of Light, the true God of God, begotten, not begotten, the essence of the Father." Although the term *Trinity* has not yet been formally used, this council was the first step towards the establishment of the doctrine of the Trinity.

3. Council of Constantinople (381 A.D.): Trinity Dogma Established

Decades later, the Church faces new questions about the role of the Holy Spirit. The Council of Constantinople (381 A.D.) finally affirmed that the Holy Spirit is also God, "who proceeds from the Father, and together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified."

Since then, the Catholic and Orthodox Churches have recognized the Trinity as one divine essence in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

D. Anthropology and Trinity Symbolism

From an anthropological perspective, the concept of the Trinity can be read as man's attempt to understand a single reality that manifests itself in three functions of experience:

1. As the origin (of the Father), the source of all existence;
2. As a revelation or form (Son), a manifestation that man can understand;
3. As the life force (Holy Spirit), the energy that connects creation to its source.

Thus, the Trinity does not mean three Gods, but one God understood in three relational aspects. This is similar to symbolism in many cultures: water, ice, and steam are three forms of the same substance.

E. The Trinity as a Dynamic Monotheism

In the modern theological view, the Trinity is understood not as the cancellation of monotheism, but as an enrichment of the understanding of the unity of God.
The unity of God is not a static uniformity, but a living and dynamic unity, in which love is the central principle.

Therefore, the Trinity is understood as relational monotheism: the One God, but living in the communion of love between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
It is this form of love that is the model of human relationships—love that springs from one and only divine reality.

F. Philosophical Synthesis: Unity That Reveals Diversity

When compared to the views of other religions, the Trinity displays a pattern of unity that contains differentiation. In Islam, God is the One absolute (*tawḥīd*), while in Christianity, oneness

is understood relationally.
But the two meet in the principle that God is not divided and is not plural in His essence.

The Trinity is not polytheism, but a theological expression of the belief that divine reality transcends the human category of unity and communion.
Thus, Christian monotheism—like the monotheism of the other great religions—is man's attempt to understand the one "He" in a different language.

MONOTHEISM IN HINDU

A. Textual Foundation: *Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti*

Hinduism is often considered a polytheistic religion because of the many gods it worships. However, if you look at the oldest sources, especially *the Rig Veda*, it will be seen that this religion has a very strong monotheistic basis. One of the fundamental texts reads:

"Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti."
(Rig Veda, I.164.46)

Meaning: "The One exists, but the wise call him by many names."

This phrase affirms that although mankind pronounces God's names in various ways, divine reality remains one and one.
Thus, Hindu monotheism is rooted not in exclusivity, but in a sense of unity that accommodates diversity.

B. The Concept of Brahman: The Singular Indescribable Reality

In Vedic philosophy and *the Upanishads*, the supreme reality is called Brahman—the absolute essence that has no beginning and no end, encompasses all things, and surpasses all names and forms. Brahman is not a personal god in the theistic sense, but rather Existence itself (Sat), Consciousness itself (Chit), and eternal Happiness (Ananda).

As taught in the *Chandogya Upanishad*:

"Sarvam khalvidam Brahma."
(All these things are indeed Brahman.)

And in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishads*:

"Aham Brahmasmi." — *I am Brahman.*
"Tat Tvam Asi." — *You are That.*

These statements point to a form of metaphysical monotheism, in which God is not a separate being from the world, but a single reality on which all existence is based.
Thus, Hindu monotheism does not abolish plurality, but rather understands it as an expression of one common divine source.

C. The Historical Origins of the Trimurti: From Polytheism to Monotheistic Integration

The concept of Trimurti — Brahma (creator), Vishnu (maintainer), and Shiva (smelter) — is often considered to be characteristic of Hinduism. Historically, however, the Trimurti did not originate in the early Vedas, but were the result of later theological and syncretic developments.

1. Early Vedic Period (±1500–1000 BC): Cosmic polytheism

In *the Rig Veda*, many gods are mentioned, such as *Indra*, *Agni*, *Varuna*, and *Soma*. Each god has its own cosmic function, but the Vedic scholars have realized that they all point to a single reality:

"The One exists, the wise call him by many names."

That is, monotheism is already present implicitly, even though ritually it seems polytheistic.

2. The Upanishads (±1000–500 BC): The Birth of Metaphysical Monotheism

In this period, the focus shifted from external rituals to inner reflection and metaphysics. God is understood as a universal principle called Brahman, and man's relationship with God is explained through the unity between the Atman (individual soul) and Brahman (the universal soul). Trimurti is not known at this time.

3. The Epic and Purana Period (±300 BC – 400 AD): Syncretism and the Formation of the Trimurti

When Vedic teachings interacted with local Indian beliefs, there was an attempt to bring together various traditions of the deity:

- Vishnu belongs to the cult of the protector of the world;
- Shiva has its roots in the cult *of Rudra*, the mountain god worshipped by non-Aryan (Dravidian and local) peoples;
- Brahma arises from the personified elaboration of *Brahman*'s philosophy.

In the Puranas texts, these three gods are united as the Trimurti—not three Gods, but the three functions of a single cosmic reality: creation, maintenance, and reporting.

This concept became a tool for social and theological integration to unite various sects such as *Shaiva*, *Vaishnava*, and *Brahma*. Trimurti affirms that all divine power is sourced from the same God.

4. Historical Conclusion

Thus, the Trimurti is the result of creative interpretation and religious syncretism, not the original revelation of the Vedic period.
It represents the historical process by which Indian society integrated local traditions into a more universal monotheistic theological system.

D. Trimurti: A Fact in Three Aspects

After being formed in the Purana period, the Trimurti became a symbol of God's singular cosmic function:

- Brahma symbolizes the power of creation,
- Vishnu symbolizes the power of maintenance,
- Shiva symbolizes the power of transformation and reproduction.

The three are not separate gods, but three manifestations of the same reality, namely Brahman. As *the Bhagavad Gita* states:

"I am the origin of all things; from Me all these things arise." (Bhagavad Gita 10:8)

This sentence affirms that the Trimurti is just a way for humans to describe the dynamics of one God.
In other words, the Trimurti is the symbolic language of a living and functional monotheism.

E. Philosophical Monotheism in Vedanta

The Vedanta school, especially the teachings of Adi Shankara (8th century AD), developed the pinnacle of Hindu monotheistic reflection in the form of Advaita (non-dualism). According to him, there is only one true reality — Brahman. All differences between God, nature, and humans are just maya (illusions).

Shankara interprets the Trimurti not as three Gods, but as three functional expressions of Brahman in the phenomenal world. When man attains true knowledge (*jnana*), he realizes that the Atman (his own soul) and Brahman are one.
Thus, Hindu monotheism leads to the existential realization that there are no two realities, only one absolute.

F. Divine Anthropology: God in Form and Without Form

Hinduism recognizes two ways of understanding God:

1. Saguna Brahman — God who is in the form and has nature, for humans who need a concrete form of worship;
2. Nirguna Brahman — God without form and nature, an absolute reality that surpasses all description.

In an anthropological framework, this shows that humans need symbols to understand the transcendent. Therefore, the worship of various gods in Hinduism is not a form of true polytheism, but rather a cultural way towards the consciousness of the one Brahman.

G. Philosophical Synthesis: Unity in Diversity

Hinduism offers a different model of monotheism: not an exclusive unity, but an inclusive unity. The one divine reality does not negate diversity, but instead accommodates it as part of the cosmic will.
Thus, Hindu monotheism does not contradict plurality, but rather explains plurality as a manifestation of oneness.

As stated in *the Rig Veda*:

"The One is called by many names."

This sentence became a universal bridge that connected Hinduism with all the major religious traditions of the world.
For, in essence, all spiritual views seek to express the same truth—that "He" is one, but understood in many ways.

ETHICAL MONOTHEISM IN ZOROASTRIANISM (ZARATHUSTRA)

1. Introduction

Zoroastrianism is one of the oldest surviving religions today, founded by Zarathustra (Zoroaster) around 1200–1000 BC in the Eastern Persian region. In the midst of a world that knew many Indo-Iranian gods, Zarathustra introduced a revolutionary idea: there was only one true God— *Ahura Mazda*, the God of Wisdom.

In the context of religious history, Zoroaster is often seen as the pioneer *of ethical monotheism*, as it emphasized the unity of God that was directly related to morality and truth, not just cosmic forces.

---

2. Textual Sources: Gāthā and Avesta

Zarathustra's original teachings are mainly contained in the Gāthā, the oldest part of the *Avesta* (Zoroastrian scriptures). In *Yasna 45.2–3*, it states:

In Yasna 45.2–3, there is a praise to Ahura Mazda as the creator of the world through the right mind. The original Avestan text reads:

𐬀𐬵𐬌𐬨𐬀𐬎𐬌 𐬨𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬀𐬵𐬌𐬙 𐬀𐬵𐬌𐬨𐬀𐬎𐬌,

with transliteration to: *Ahu Mazda aŋhaiti aŋhaita,*

which translates into English as: "I acknowledge You, Ahura Mazda, as the first and last, most worthy of worship, for through the Good Mind You created the world." This statement affirms the monotheistic concept in Zoroastrianism, in which Ahura Mazda is the one wise God, the creator of the universe through wisdom and right mind, and worthy of worship as the primary.

This text affirms pure monotheism: The single, wise God, creator of good, and the source of the cosmic order. There is no other god equal to Him.

---

3. The Concept of Godhead: Ahura Mazda and the Dual Aspects of the World

Ahura Mazda means "God of Wisdom". He is a good, true, and enlightened God. The world He created consists of two ethical principles:

- Spenta Mainyu — good spirit (guardian of truth and life)
- Angra Mainyu — evil spirits (tempters and destroyers)

However, the two are not equal. *Angra Mainyu* is not a rival god, but a deviant creation. Thus, Zoroastrianism is not a metaphysical dualism, but an ethical monotheism: only the Ahura Mazda is eternal and omnipotent, while evil is temporary and will be defeated by truth (*asha*).

---

4. Ethics and Human Responsibility

In Zarathustra's teachings, monotheism is not only theological, but also moral. Man is called to participate in the cosmic struggle between truth (*asha*) and falsehood (*druj*). The three basic

principles of life are referred to as *"Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds"* — good thoughts, speech, and deeds.

This was the beginning of *a universal moral theology*, in which faith in God was to be actualized through deeds. In *Yasna 34.2*, it is stated:

"He who does good, thinks right, and speaks the truth, is part of Ahura Mazda."

---

5. The Concept of the Cosmos and the Hereafter

Zoroaster introduced the earliest eschatological doctrine in the history of religion:

- The world has a beginning and an end.
- There will be a final judgment (*Frashokereti*).
- The righteous soul ascends to *the Heaven of Light*, while the wicked fall into darkness.

This concept later had a strong influence on post-Babylonian Jewry, and became the forerunner of afterlife theology in Christianity and Islam. Ideas such as hell, the physical resurrection, and the end times took many forms from the Zoroastrian cosmological system.

---

6. Relationship with Semitic Monotheism

After the conquest of Babylon by the Persians (539 BC), the Jews interacted with Zoroastrians. From this period, theological similarities emerged:

- God the only creator (Ahura Mazda ↔ Yahweh)
- Angels and demons (Amesha Spenta ↔ Angels; The Devil Wears ↔ Prada)
- The Hereafter and the resurrection of the body
- The day of the last judgment

Zoroastrian's ethical monotheism gave rational form to divine morality—the idea that evil is not a force parallel to God, but an aberration that will be defeated by the light of truth.

---

7. Anthropological and Philosophical Perspectives

Anthropologically, Zoroastrianism marked the transformation from ritual polytheism to moral monotheism. The sacrificial ritual was replaced by the practice of purity of mind and righteousness of heart. God is no longer identified with the elements of nature (fire, water, earth), but rather becomes a principle of universal wisdom.

From the perspective of religious philosophy, Zoroastrianism became the link between *Brahmanism* in India and *Yahwism* in the Middle East. He passed down the symbolic language of Light and Darkness that survives today in theology and mysticism.

---

8. Chapter Conclusion

Zarathustra introduced the earliest forms of ethical and cosmic monotheism: God as the source of goodness, truth, and light; man as a moral agent in His cosmic plan.

Compared to other traditions:

- Islam inherited the spirit of *tanzīh* and cosmic justice.
- Christianity adopts eschatological visions and symbols of light.
- Jews reinforce the concept of a transcendent moral God.

Thus, Zoroastrian's teachings are not only part of Persian history, but also an important chapter in the spiritual evolution of mankind towards the recognition of *the One*.

MONOTHEISM IN BUDDHISM

1. Buddhist Text Study: The Search for the Unborn

Early Buddhism as recorded in *the Tripiṭaka* did not deny the existence of transcendent reality, but denied its personification. Buddhism does not speak of God in the same personal sense as Western and Middle Eastern theologies do, but rather leads to an awareness of the highest reality that transcends all forms of phenomena. In *Udāna* VIII:3, Gautama Buddha stated:

🕉️ Pāli Text (Udāna VIII.3)

"Ajātaṁ, abhūtaṁ, akataṁ, asaṅkhataṁ, bhikkhave, dhammaṁ paññāyati. Ajātaṁ, abhūtaṁ, akataṁ, asaṅkhataṁ, bhikkhave, dhammaṁ paññāya, ajātaṁ, abhūtaṁ, akataṁ, asaṅkhataṁ, bhikkhave, dhammaṁ paññāya, ajātaṁ, abhūtaṁ, akataṁ, asaṅkhataṁ, bhikkhave, dhammaṁ paññāya."

📜 Free Translation

"There is, O bhikkhus, something that is not born, does not become, is not created, is not arranged. If there is nothing that is not born, not become, not created, not arranged, then there can be no way out of being born, becoming, being created, and being arranged. But because there is something that is not born, does not become, is not created, is not arranged, then there is a way out of being born, becoming, being created, and arranged."

This text is one of the most metaphysical expressions in the entire Buddhist canon. The phrases "unborn" (*ajāta*), "uncreated" (*abhūta*), and "unstructured" (*asaṅkhata*) refer to a single entity or principle of reality that transcends the entire phenomenal world. This principle in the context of Buddhism is understood as *Nibbāna* (Pali) or *Nirvāṇa* (Sans. Nirvāṇam), i.e. the supreme state, free from all innate and mental conditions, free from birth and death, cause and effect.

🕉️ Pāli Text (Dhammapada 277–279)

277. *Sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā*
278. *Sabbe saṅkhārā dukkha*
279. *Sabbe dhammā anattā*

📜 Free Translation

277. "Everything that is formed is not eternal." 278. "All that is formed is suffering." 279. "All phenomena are without self."

"If with wisdom a person sees this, then he turns away from suffering. That is the path to holiness."

Both texts reveal that at the core of Buddhism is the awareness of the impermanence and impermanence of all things. However, behind all that change and mortality is implied an absolute reality that is unborn and unstructured. This reality is not nihilism, but a *pure reality* that does not depend on any cause—a form of absolute reality in the metaphysical sense, even though it is not named "God."

In the language of religious philosophy, this Buddhist view can be referred to as *negative monotheism* or *transmonotheism*—that is, the belief in the existence of one absolute reality that cannot be explained by personal categories, names, or forms. Thus, *Nibbāna* is not merely a mental state, but a metaphysical symbol of "the unborn and the uncreated."

---

2. Anthropological Analysis: Buddhism as a Response to Brahmin Polytheism and Anthropomorphism

From the perspective of religious anthropology, Buddhism was born as a reaction to the dominant Brahmanist religious system in India in the 6th century BC. The Brahmin religion, which has its origins in the Vedic tradition, knows many gods (*devas*) such as Indra, Agni, Varuna, and Surya. The gods were worshipped through sacrificial rituals administered by the Brahmins, the highest caste group in the ancient Indian social system.

In subsequent developments, the concept of *Brahman* emerged, the absolute principle from which all things originate, as reflected in the *Upanishads*. However, in social and cultural practice, the concept *of Brahman* is often mixed with ritualism, mythology, and anthropomorphism, which is the tendency to portray God in human nature and form.

Gautama Buddha rejected two main points of this system: (1) the spiritual dependence on rituals and castes, and (2) the belief that salvation could be obtained through the intercession of the gods. In his view, salvation or liberation (*mokṣa/nirvāṇa*) is not obtained through external sacrifice, but through inner understanding and discipline. Thus, Buddhism transformed into a spiritual movement that was ethical and empirical in nature—relying on direct experience, not on the authority of revelation or gods.

The anthropological approach shows that the rejection of Brahmin polytheism is not merely a theological reaction, but a social phenomenon. Buddhism rejects the social structure that justifies the superiority of the Brahmin caste on the basis of closeness to God. By rejecting anthropomorphism and affirming a universal inner path, Buddhism establishes an inclusive and non-personal spirituality.

From this it can be said that the Buddhist teachings on *Nibbāna* are a form of theological reform of *Brahman*. If *the Brahman* of the Vedas is understood as an absolute principle that can still be worshipped, then *Nibbāna* in Buddhism is an absolute principle that cannot be worshipped, because it is impersonal and does not become a dualistic object between subject and object.

In the framework of religious anthropology, this transformation can be read as a shift from *theistic monotheism* to *philosophical monotheism*, from belief in a personal God to an awareness of a single reality that transcends personification. Thus, Buddhism presents a "silent" face of monotheism—without mentioning the name of God, but acknowledging one absolute reality.

---

3. Conceptual Comparison: Buddhism and *Tanzīh* in Islam

In Islamic theology, God is understood as an absolute and incomparable reality. This concept is expressed through the term *tanzīh*, which is the purification of God from all forms of likeness with creatures. God cannot be described or likened to anything, as stated in the Qur'an: "There is nothing like Him" (Qur'an. al-Syūrā [42]:11).

This concept reaches its most concise and profound form in Surah al-Ikhlāṣ:

قُلْ هُوَ ٱللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ٱللَّهُ ٱلصَّمَدُ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُۥ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌۢ

Say: He is Allah the Almighty. Allah is the place where everything depends. He had no children and was not begotten. And there is nothing equal to Him. (QS. al-Ikhlāṣ [112]:1–4)

This surah is the core of *tawḥīd* and the peak *of tanzīh*. Allah does not depend on anything (*al-Ṣamad*), does not give birth and does not give birth (*lam yalid wa lam yūlad*), and has no match (*lam yakun lahu kufuwan aḥad*). In this understanding, God is a completely independent, unstructured, and transcendent reality of all limited forms of existence.

When compared to *Udāna* VIII:3, both have striking metaphysical resonances:

Aspects	*Udāna* VIII:3 (Buddhism)	Surah al-Ikhlāṣ (Islam)
The Essence of Reality	There is something that is not born, not created, not arranged.	God is begotten and unbegotten.
Ontological Independence	This reality does not depend on anything that is created.	Allah is *al-Ṣamad*, the place on which all things depend.
Transcendence	Transcending all worldly phenomena and categories.	There is nothing equal to Him.
The Purpose of Spirituality	The way out of the born and arranged.	Purification of faith from shirk and form worship.

This comparison shows that although the contexts are different—Buddhism speaks in the language of mind consciousness and Islam in the language of revelation—they both affirm a single reality that is not dependent, uncreated, and transcends all forms.

In the language of religious philosophy, *Udāna* represents an *implicit form of monotheism*, while *al-Ikhlāṣ* is an *explicit form of monotheism*. Both reject ontological plurality and affirm the absolute unity that is the source of all that exists. Thus, *tanzīh* in Islam and the teaching of the "unborn" in Buddhism are two different expressions of the same metaphysical intuition: the recognition of a single reality that is beyond the reach of mind and language.

ETHICAL MONOTHEISM IN ZOROASTRIANISM (ZARATHUSTRA)

1. Introduction

Zoroastrianism is one of the oldest surviving religions today, founded by Zarathustra (Zoroaster) around 1200–1000 BC in the Eastern Persian region. In the midst of a world that knew many Indo-Iranian gods, Zarathustra introduced a revolutionary idea: there was only one true God— *Ahura Mazda*, the God of Wisdom.

In the context of religious history, Zoroaster is often seen as the pioneer *of ethical monotheism*, as it emphasized the unity of God that was directly related to morality and truth, not just cosmic forces.

---

2. Textual Sources: Gāthā and Avesta

Zarathustra's original teachings are mainly contained in the Gāthā, the oldest part of the *Avesta* (Zoroastrian scriptures). In *Yasna 45.2–3*, it states:

In Yasna 45.2–3, there is a praise to Ahura Mazda as the creator of the world through the right mind. The original Avestan text reads:

𐬀𐬵𐬌𐬨𐬀𐬎𐬌 𐬨𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬀𐬵𐬌𐬙 𐬀𐬵𐬌𐬨𐬀𐬎𐬌,

with transliteration to: *Ahu Mazda aŋhaiti aŋhaita,*

which translates into English as: "I acknowledge You, Ahura Mazda, as the first and last, most worthy of worship, for through the Good Mind You created the world." This statement affirms the monotheistic concept in Zoroastrianism, in which Ahura Mazda is the one wise God, the creator of the universe through wisdom and right mind, and worthy of worship as the primary.

This text affirms pure monotheism: The single, wise God, creator of good, and the source of the cosmic order. There is no other god equal to Him.

---

3. The Concept of Godhead: Ahura Mazda and the Dual Aspects of the World

Ahura Mazda means "God of Wisdom". He is a good, true, and enlightened God. The world He created consists of two ethical principles:

- Spenta Mainyu — good spirit (guardian of truth and life)
- Angra Mainyu — evil spirits (tempters and destroyers)

However, the two are not equal. *Angra Mainyu* is not a rival god, but a deviant creation. Thus, Zoroastrianism is not a metaphysical dualism, but an ethical monotheism: only the Ahura Mazda is eternal and omnipotent, while evil is temporary and will be defeated by truth (*asha*).

---

4. Ethics and Human Responsibility

In Zarathustra's teachings, monotheism is not only theological, but also moral. Man is called to participate in the cosmic struggle between truth (*asha*) and falsehood (*druj*). The three basic

principles of life are referred to as *"Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds"* — good thoughts, speech, and deeds.

This was the beginning of *a universal moral theology*, in which faith in God was to be actualized through deeds. In *Yasna 34.2*, it is stated:

"He who does good, thinks right, and speaks the truth, is part of Ahura Mazda."

---

5. The Concept of the Cosmos and the Hereafter

Zoroaster introduced the earliest eschatological doctrine in the history of religion:

- The world has a beginning and an end.
- There will be a final judgment (*Frashokereti*).
- The righteous soul ascends to *the Heaven of Light*, while the wicked fall into darkness.

This concept later had a strong influence on post-Babylonian Jewry, and became the forerunner of afterlife theology in Christianity and Islam. Ideas such as hell, the physical resurrection, and the end times took many forms from the Zoroastrian cosmological system.

---

6. Relationship with Semitic Monotheism

After the conquest of Babylon by the Persians (539 BC), the Jews interacted with Zoroastrians. From this period, theological similarities emerged:

- God the only creator (Ahura Mazda ↔ Yahweh)
- Angels and demons (Amesha Spenta ↔ Angels; The Devil Wears ↔ Prada)
- The Hereafter and the resurrection of the body
- The day of the last judgment

Zoroastrian's ethical monotheism gave rational form to divine morality—the idea that evil is not a force parallel to God, but an aberration that will be defeated by the light of truth.

---

7. Anthropological and Philosophical Perspectives

Anthropologically, Zoroastrianism marked the transformation from ritual polytheism to moral monotheism. The sacrificial ritual was replaced by the practice of purity of mind and righteousness of heart. God is no longer identified with the elements of nature (fire, water, earth), but rather becomes a principle of universal wisdom.

From the perspective of religious philosophy, Zoroastrianism became the link between *Brahmanism* in India and *Yahwism* in the Middle East. He passed down the symbolic language of Light and Darkness that survives today in theology and mysticism.

---

8. Chapter Conclusion

Zarathustra introduced the earliest forms of ethical and cosmic monotheism: God as the source of goodness, truth, and light; man as a moral agent in His cosmic plan.

Compared to other traditions:

- Islam inherited the spirit of *tanzīh* and cosmic justice.
- Christianity adopts eschatological visions and symbols of light.
- Jews reinforce the concept of a transcendent moral God.

Thus, Zoroastrian's teachings are not only part of Persian history, but also an important chapter in the spiritual evolution of mankind towards the recognition of *the One*.

MONOTHEISM IN TAOISM

1. Taoist Text Study: Taoism as the Origin of Everything That Exists and Doesn't Exist

In the Laozi teachings recorded in *the Dao De Jing* (道德經), *the concept of Taoism* (道) occupies a central position. *The Tao* is not just a "way" in the sense of ethics or way of life, but a metaphysical principle that is the source and basis of all reality. The first chapter *of Dao De Jing* states:

道可道,非常道。 名可名，非常名。 無名天地之始；有名萬物之母。
"The Tao that can be explained is not the eternal Tao. A name that can be called is not an eternal name. The nameless is the origin of heaven and earth; The one named is the mother of all creatures."
(*Dao De Jing*, Chapter 1)

This verse illustrates that *the Tao* is an absolute reality that is unspeakable, nameless, and transcends all forms of duality. It is the "origin of the heavens and the earth", which is the universal principle that gives birth to and penetrates all things.

In chapter 25, Laozi continues:

有物混成,先天地生。 寂兮寥兮，獨立而不改，周行而不殆，可以為天下母。
"There is something formless yet complete, which was born before heaven and earth. Silent and empty, standing alone and unchanged, circling endlessly. She can be called the mother of the world."

Here, *the Tao* is described as the principle that existed before all existence (*xiantian di sheng*), being silent, singular, unchanging, and being the basis of all that exists. However, *the Tao* is not a personal God; it is more like a cosmic principle that is both immanent and transcendent.

Nevertheless, *Dao De Jing* gave the impression that *the Tao* was the only true reality from which all things arose and to him all returned. In this sense, *the Tao* has similarities with the concept *of wahdat al-wujūd* in Islamic philosophy, which is the unity of existence that unites all reality in a single source.

---

2. Anthropological Analysis: Taoism and Non-Anthropomorphic Cosmology

From the point of view of religious anthropology, Taoism was born in China as a critique of the ritual system and social structure of early Confucianism. Pre-Taoistic Chinese society knew many spirits (*shen*), gods, and ancestors who were worshipped in the context of agrarian life. However, Laozi and later Zhuangzi introduced a more cosmic view, rejecting anthropomorphism, and affirming natural equilibrium as a source of order.

In Chinese culture, the personal God is not the center of religious experience as it is in Semitic religions. The supreme reality is better understood as the universal principle present in the natural order—a system of balance between *yin* and *yang*. *The Tao* does not have a will in the personal sense, but is a law of nature that works effortlessly (*wu wei* 無為).

Anthropologist Clifford Geertz interprets this kind of system as "moral cosmology", in which human beings do not submit to personal gods, but rather participate in cosmic harmony. Therefore, *the Tao* is not "a God who is worshipped," but a "conscious order."

In this context, Taoism can be understood as a form of non-personal philosophical monotheism. He affirms the oneness of reality through the principle of the integration of the universe. No two principles are at odds, as they all come from one source: *Taoism*. This principle is seen in *Dao De Jing* Chapter 42:

道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物。
"The Tao begets one, one gives birth to two, two gives birth to three, and three gives birth to everything."

This expression describes the process of emanation from absolute unity to relative diversity. All things that exist come from a single source and will return to it. This view, in the anthropology of religion, is a form of spiritual evolution from folk polytheism toward the consciousness of a single principle that holds everything together.

---

3. Conceptual Comparison: *Tao* and *Tanzīh* in Islam

The *concept of Taoism* bears a structural resemblance to *tanzīh* in Islam, in that both reject restrictions on the highest reality. *The Tao* is "nameless", while *tanzīh* affirms that Allah "has nothing like Him" (QS. al-Syūrā [42]:11).

In Surah al-Ikhlāṣ, Allah is referred to as *Aḥad* (the one and the absolute) and *al-Ṣamad* (the place on which all things depend). Thus, just as *the Tao* is the source and foundation of all existence, *al-Ṣamad* also means "God on whom all creatures are based".

This metaphysical comparison can be summarized as follows:

Aspects	*Tao* (Taoism)	*Allah* in Surah al-Ikhlāṣ
The Essence of Reality	An eternal principle that is nameless, the source of heaven and earth.	God is One, the place on which all things depend.
Characteristic	Impersonal, unorganized, all-encompassing.	Transcendent, not similar to anything.
Relations with the World	The universe is a spontaneous manifestation of the Tao.	Nature was created and dependent on Allah.
Expression of Spirituality	Alignment with the Tao through *wu wei* (not coercion).	Total surrender (*islām*) to the Divine will.

Thus, both *the Tao* and the concept *of tanzīh* reject all forms of anthropomorphism and duality. However, there are important differences:

- In Islam, Allah is *personal and conscious*; He knows and wills.
- In Taoism, *the Tao* is *non-personal and spontaneous*, without will or consciousness in the human sense.

Both touch on the same level of metaphysical unity, but with different expressions and language: Islam through revelation and theology of personal divinity, while Taoism through natural philosophy and cosmic experience.

MONOTHEISM IN CONFUCIANISM

1. Text Studies: Tian as a Principle of Moral and Cosmic Order

In the teachings of Confucius (*Kongzi* 孔子), the term *Tian* (天) — literally meaning "sky" — occupies a very important position. *Tian* is not just a physical sky, but a supreme reality that governs the moral order and the cosmos. In *Lunyu* (Analekta), Confucius said:

天生德於予,桓魋其如予何?
"Heaven has instilled virtue in me; What can man do to me?" (Luke VII:23)

This expression shows that *Tian* is not just nature or impersonal power, but a source of morality and legitimacy. Confucius considered *Tian* to be a power that knows and judges human actions:

知天命者,不怨天,不尤人。
"Whoever knows the decrees of the Heavens, he does not complain to the Heavens and does not blame man." (Luke XIV:36)

In *Zhongyong's* text (The Doctrine of Balance), *Tian's concept* becomes more philosophical:

天命之謂性，率性之謂道，修道之謂教。
"What Heaven has decreed is called nature; following the nature is called the path (Dao); developing the road is called education."

Here, *Tian* is not a god figure, but the source of human nature and the moral law of the universe. *Tian* gave birth to *xing* (inner nature), and a human being who lives according to *the Dao* means living according to his nature that comes from *Tian*. Thus, *Tian* became a kind of principle of unity between nature, morality, and humanity.

In *Shujing* (the Book of Documents), which is older than the time of Confucius, *Tian* appears as the authority that mandates kings — *Tianming* (天命), "Mandate of Heaven":

惟天無親,克敬惟親。
"Heaven has no relatives, but loves the filibuster."

That is, the king's power and legitimacy depended on his morality; when the king was no longer just, *Tian* could revoke the mandate. This concept affirms that *Tian* is the supreme source of morality, not a god worshipped with sacrificial sacrifices, but rather a spiritual power that sides with truth and order.

Thus, in the layers of classical Chinese texts, *Tian* evolved from the "sky as a cosmic god" in the Shang dynasty to the "universal moral principle" of the Zhou and Confucian periods.

---

2. Anthropological Analysis: From the God of the Sky to the Transcendent Moral Principle

From an anthropological point of view, *the concept of Tian* is the result of a long transformation of the ancient Chinese religious system that is highly polytheistic. In the Shang period (16th century BCE), people worshipped many ancestral spirits and gods of nature, with *Shangdi* (上帝, Supreme God) as the supreme figure who was worshipped with great rituals.

However, in the Zhou period (11th century B.C.), the ritual system was replaced by *a more abstract and moral* Tian concept.*Tian* is no longer the personification of spirit, but the principle of justice and order of nature. In this context, anthropologist Robert Bellah calls the transition from *Shangdi* to *Tian* a transition from "religious kingship" to "moral order cosmology."

Confucius and his disciples later erased the remnants of anthropomorphism. *Tian* is no longer understood as a "figure" with an emotional will, but rather as an ethical law that is immanent in the structure of nature. Thus, man no longer relates to God through offerings, but through ethics: honesty, faithfulness, and virtue (*ren* 仁).

This marks a shift from ritual-based religion to moral spirituality, or from "vertical transcendence" to "ethical transcendence." Anthropologist Marcel Granet called the Confucian system moral *cosm*—in which the supreme reality is not personified, but is absorbed into the order of social life and human virtue.

This development suggests that moral monotheism can emerge without an explicit theological concept. *Tian* plays like the one God in that it creates universal moral laws, but without image or personality. It is one, unchangeable, and the source of all goodness and truth — a principle that is very close to the spirit of *tanzīh* in Islam.

---

3. Conceptual Comparison: Tian and Tanzīh in Islam

When compared to the concept of *tanzīh* in Islam, *Tian* has two sides that are similar but in different directions.

- First, *Tian* rejects anthropomorphism: it is not depicted with human appearance, emotion, or will.
- Second, *Tian* functions as a source of universal morality and order, just as Allah in the Qur'an is the source of law and balance (*mīzān*).

However, in Islamic theology, Allah is not only the source of natural order, but also the Substance who wills and speaks. In Surah al-Ikhlāṣ, Allah is affirmed as *Aḥad* (the Absolute One) and *al-Ṣamad* (The Place of all things), who is "childless and unbegotten."

If *Tian* is a non-personal moral principle, then *God* is a personal reality that has consciousness and will. This comparison can be summarized as follows:

Aspects	*Tian* (Confucianism)	*Allah* (Surah al-Ikhlāṣ)
Nature	The moral principle is universal, not a personal figure.	God is One, conscious, and willing.
Function	Maintain moral order and the universe.	Creator, maintainer, and source of moral law.
Relationship with humans	Embodied through virtue and social harmony.	It is manifested through worship and spiritual obedience.
Spiritual approach	Ethics and moral education (*ren* and *li*).	Tauhid and worship.

Although different in form, the two share the spirit *of transcendence without anthropomorphism*. In Islam, this is called *tanzīh* — God's purification of all the attributes of beings. In Confucianism, this is evident in the rejection of the personification of *Tian* and the emphasis that man approaches *the Sky* through morality, not through ritual offerings.

Thus, *Tian* can be seen as an early form of monotheistic consciousness in the Eastern tradition, which expressed the moral unity of the cosmos, while Islam continued the idea in the form of a more assertive and transcendent theological revelation.

That's fine — including Shinto is necessary, because it represents the most distinctive form of Japanese religiosity: not purely theistic, but it holds the concept *of cosmic oneness* that is interesting when read anthropologically and compared to revelational monotheism.

MONITHEISM IN SHINTO

1. Text Study: The Supreme Reality in Kojiki and Nihon Shoki

Shinto (神道, *Kami no Michi*, "The Way of the Kami") literally means "the divine way" or "the way of the spirits." It is not centered on revelation or dogmatic scripture, but is sourced from early Japanese mythological texts such as *Kojiki* (古事記, "Records of Ancient Affairs", 712 AD) and *Nihon Shoki* (日本書紀, "Chronicles of Japan", 720 AD).

In *Kojiki*, the supreme reality is depicted through the process of emanation or cosmic emergence from *Ame-no-Minaka-Nushi-no-Kami* (天之御中主神, "God Lord of the Middle Heavens"), which first appeared "on its own" in the midst of the celestial void.

「於是天地初發之時、於高天原成神名、天之御中主神、次高御産巣日神、次神産巣日神。

」

"When the heavens and earth began to form, the first gods to appear on the celestial plateau were Ame-no-Minaka-Nushi-no-Kami, then Takami-Musubi-no-Kami, and Kamimusubi-no-Kami." (*Kojiki*, Early Chapter)

Researchers such as Motoori Norinaga and Sokyo Ono interpret *Ame-no-Minaka-Nushi* as the supreme principle—not an anthropomorphic god, but a central reality that is the source of the whole of us (spirits).
He is intangible, unborn, and not dead; from Him arises the order of heaven, earth, and the executing gods.

In *Nihon Shoki*, this narrative is structured more systematically and reflects the syncretism between local Japanese beliefs and Chinese cosmology. *Ame-no-Minaka-Nushi* is understood to be the center of universal order.
Although Shinto knows thousands *of kami* (spirits), all of them are believed to be manifestations of a single divine power that permeates the entire realm.

---

2. Anthropological Analysis: Cosmic Monism in Ritual Polytheism

Anthropologically, Shinto is often perceived as polytheistic because of its abundance *of kami*: mountain spirits, rivers, lightning, fertility, and ancestors. However, ethno-religious research suggests that Shinto has a hidden monistic structure.
All *of us* are not separate entities, but expressions of one common holiness — called *musubi*, the force that "binds" all things together into a single living entity.

In Shinto rituals, priests do not "worship many gods" as in Greek polytheism, but communicate with various aspects of a single sanctity that animates the world.
Religious anthropologists such as Thomas Kasulis call this "relational monism"—a single reality revealed through the harmonious relationship between man, nature, and spirit.

Shinto, thus, is not polytheism in the Western sense, but natural panentheism: everything in the world contains *us*, and all *of us* derive from a single source of the sanctity of the cosmos. In this perspective, the ritual of offerings (*matsuri*) is not the worship of many gods, but rather the recognition of the presence of sacred unity in many forms of nature.

---

3. Conceptual Comparison: Ame-no-Minaka-Nushi and the Concept of Tanzīh in Islam

Interestingly compared to *tanzīh* in Islam, *Ame-no-Minaka-Nushi* is also depicted as formless, without descent, and appearing "alone" in the midst of emptiness. This is reminiscent of the affirmation of *Surah al-Ikhlāṣ*:

قُلْ هُوَ ٱللَّهُ أَحَدٌ، ٱللَّهُ ٱلصَّمَدُ، لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ، وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُۥ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ
"Say: He is Allah. Allah is the place where everything depends. He had no children and was not begotten. And there is nothing equal to Him."

Like Allah in Islam, *Ame-no-Minaka-Nushi* is a reality that has no partner or form. It appeared first, without cause, and became the origin of all existence.
However, the difference lies in the conceptual direction:

Aspects	*Ame-no-Minaka-Nushi* (Shinto)	*Allah* (Islam)
Nature	A cosmic source without a face; spiritual power that encompasses nature.	Transcendent and immanent God, creator and preserver of nature.
Relationship	Present in all *of us* as a manifestation of holiness.	Separate from beings but known through signs (*āyāt*).
Transcendence	More immanent — the sacred that is spread in nature.	Completely transcendent yet introducing itself through revelation.

Thus, from the anthropological approach of religion, Shinto contains a form of "tanzīh imanen" — it purifies the purity of anthropomorphism, but places it in nature, not outside of nature. Whereas Islam contains transcendent tanzīh, which affirms the absolute distinction between the Creator and creation, even though His signs are present in all creation.

---

4. Provisional Conclusion: Shinto as a Symbolic Polytheism, Ontological Monism

Although ritually Shinto appears polytheistic, its theological essence is monistic and symbolic. We are plural symbols of a single holy reality, just as the attributes of God in Islam are manifestations of the One Substance.
Thus, Shinto shares a spiritual line with other monotheistic teachings—recognizing that sacred reality is one, even though it is revealed by many names, places, and symbols.

SOCRATES AND GREEK RATIONAL MONOTHEISM

1. Greek Historical and Religious Context

In the 5th century BC, Greek society lived in a strong polytheistic belief system. Gods such as Zeus, Athena, Apollo, and Poseidon became centers of social, political, and ritual life. However, since the time of the pre-Socratic philosophers (Thales, Anaximandros, Herakleitos), a new tendency has begun to emerge — that is, to search for a single principle (archē) that underlies all of reality: water, air, fire, or *logos*.

Socrates (470–399 BC) emerged in the midst of this shift. He is known not as a cosmologist, but as a seeker of moral truth and justice. But in his confession (as recorded in Plato's *Apologia*), Socrates is clearly talking about the one and omniscient God, who governs the universe and provides mental guidance for man.

Chapter X. Socrates' Philosophical Monotheism

X.1. Introduction

Socrates (470–399 BC) lived in polytheistic Athens. Although his society worshipped many gods, Socrates emphasized belief in one higher divine principle, which guides morality and the cosmos order. This perspective is often called philosophical monotheism, in contrast to Abrahamic monotheism, because it is rational and ethical, not formal revelation.

X.2. Apologia (Plato, 24b)

One of the main proofs appears in the *Apologia*, when Socrates defends himself against accusations of disbelief in the gods of the city.

Greek Text

πιστεύω γὰρ ὅτι θεοί εἰσιν, καὶ ἄλλως μὲν, ὡς οἱ κατήγοροι μου πιστεύουσιν, ἐν ἄλλῳ δὲ τρόπῳ ὑψηλότερον.

English Translation

"For I do believe that there are gods, and in a sense higher than that in which any of my accusers believe in them."

Analysis

- The word θεοί (theoi) is the plural form, referring to the Athenian gods that the people believe.
- Socrates affirmed his belief in something higher than the local gods—a principle or transcendent single God.
- This shows that although he lived in a polytheistic environment, Socrates recognized philosophical monotheism, which emphasized the moral and cosmic sovereignty of God.

X.3. Daimonion and Divine Guidance

Socrates also spoke of daimonions, inner voices or divine revelations that guide his actions.

Greek Texts (Apologia 31d–32a)

τοῦτ’ ἐστὶ φωνὴ θεία, ἡ ἐμὴν ὑποθήκη.

Free Translation

"It was a divine voice, God's guidance to me."

Analysis

- This inner voice affirms the existence of a single divine entity that governs morality, distinct from the police gods.
- The Daimonion guides Socrates to reject evil and act wisely.
- In this context, Socrates' monotheism emerged as an ethical basis, not a ritual.

X.4. Xenophon, Memorabilia I.3.1–2

In Xenophon's work, Socrates more explicitly affirms belief in one God.

Greek Text

Σωκράτης δὲ καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους θεοὺς ἑτίμα κατὰ τὰ πάτρια, καὶ δὴ καὶ τὸν τοῦ δήμου θεὸν, ᾧπερ ἡ πόλις θύει· καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς πολλάκις ἥδετο καὶ μαντεύεσθαι ἐχρῆτο. ἔλεγε δὲ ὅτι τὸν θεὸν οὐδὲν ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲν λανθάνει, ἀλλ’ ἐπιμελεῖται πάντων.

English Translation

"Socrates also honored the other gods according to the customs of his country, and especially the god of the city, to whom the state sacrifices. He often took part in the rites and used divination. But he used to say that nothing that men do escapes the eye of God, and that God takes care of all things."

Analysis

- Ho theos (ὁ θεός) → singular "God", distinct from the poly gods.
- Socrates respected ritual, but believed in one transcendent God who knows and governs all.
- This shows a form of philosophical monotheism, in which God is understood as a moral and cosmic principle.

X.5. Socrates' Monotheism vs Abrahamic and Buddhist

1. With Islam/Judaism/Christianity:
    - The concept of a transcendent single God is in line with monotheism and the Shema of Israel.
    - The difference is that Socrates emphasizes rationality and morality, not formal revelation.
2. With Buddhism:

- Similar to the principle in *Udāna VIII.3* or Dhammapada 277–279, Socrates emphasized the absolute reality that guides man, as a way out of moral and social suffering.

3. Philosophical vs Ritualistic:
    - Socrates emphasized beliefs and ethics, not rituals.
    - This is relevant in the comparative study of monotheism: God as a universal moral principle.

X.6. Section Conclusion

- Socrates is an example of philosophical monotheism in a polytheistic society.
- He believed in one God, higher than the local gods.
- This God acts as a moral and cosmic principle, guiding man towards goodness.
- This concept opens up a path of thought across traditions, showing that the recognition of a single divine reality can arise before formal revelation religion.

3. Anthropological and Philosophical Analysis: From Polytheism to the Singular Divine Ethics

Socrates did not begin monotheism with dogma, but with ethical awareness.
He realized that morality could not depend on the will of many gods who often contradicted each other in mythology.
Goodness must have a single and perfect source. From this comes the idea that there is only One truly good God—a rational reality that is the measure of human good.

Anthropologically, this idea is the rationalization of monotheism, which is the process by which human moral consciousness leads to the unification of the concept of divinity. Socrates purifies the concept of God from human nature (anthropomorphism), just like the concept *of tanzīh* in Islam.

---

4. Parallels with the Concept of Tanzīh and Surah al-Ikhlāṣ

When compared to Islamic *tanzīh*, Socrates' thought points in the same direction:

- He rejected the image of God in human form.
- He affirms that God is only the cause of good, not evil.
- He regarded God as the only source of true wisdom.

This spirit is in line with *Surah al-Ikhlāṣ*:

قُلْ هُوَ ٱللَّهُ أَحَدٌ، ٱللَّهُ ٱلصَّمَدُ، لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ، وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُۥ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

Both of these views affirm the singularity of the supreme reality and reject all forms of God's likeness with creatures.
But the fundamental differences are:

- Socrates arrived at monotheism through rational reflection, not revelation.

- Islam affirms monotheism through divine revelation that contains rational as well as spiritual truths.

Thus, Socrates can be called a philosophical monotheist — one who through his intellect came to the realization of the One God, before the existence of the religion of revelation that explicitly stated it.

---

5. Historical Relevance: The Road from Socrates to Greco-Roman Monotheism

Socrates' teachings paved the way for the theistic philosophy of Plato, Aristotle, and later the Stoic philosophers.Plato spoke of *the Idea of the Good* — the Supreme Good that is the cause of all things. Aristotle called it *the Prime Mover*, the eternal and unchanging First Mover. It was from here that the tradition of philosophical monotheism developed and was later absorbed by early Christian theologians, such as Augustine and Thomas Aquinas.

In other words, the seed of Socrates' monotheism was the forerunner of Western rational monotheism, which later met with Islamic theology in peripatetic philosophy.

7.5. The Relationship of Greek Philosophy and Abrahamic Monotheism

1. Historical Setting: The Encounter of East and West

After the conquest of Alexander the Great (4th century BC), the Eastern Mediterranean and Near Eastern regions became a space for dialogue between Greek philosophy and the Hebrew tradition. In the city of Alexandria, the center of Hellenistic culture, Jewish thinkers such as Philo of Alexandria (20 BC – 50 AD) began to read the Hebrew Scriptures in Greek (*Septuagint*), and interpreted the concept of YHWH with philosophical terms such as ὁ θεός (ho theos) and λόγος (logos). Philo viewed *the Logos* as an "intermediary" between the transcendent God and the material world—an idea that later influenced early Christian theology (John 1:1).

---

2. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle: The Seeds of the Concept of Rational Divinity

The concept of the "One" in the Socrates–Plato–Aristotle tradition became an intellectual bridge between the world of Greek myth and the idea of a single God in Abrahamic revelation.

- Socrates introduced the idea of a universal, not local, moral God.
- Plato (in *Republic* VI, 509b) speaks of τὸ ἀγαθόν (to agathon) — "The Supreme Good" as the source of truth and existence.
- Aristotle (in *Metaphysics* XII, 1072b) refers to God as ὃ νοεῖ νοῦν (ho noeî noûn) — "Who thinks of the mind itself," *Primum Movens*, the first non-actuated mover.

All three gradually abandoned mythological polytheism towards the concept of Divine Oneness that is transcendent, rational, and independent of the material world.
When this idea was later adopted by Jewish and Hellenistic Christian thinkers, and eventually by Muslim philosophers (Al-Kindi, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Al-Ghazali), there was a process of "monotheistic Greekism" and at the same time "monotheistic" of Greek philosophy.

---

3. The Traces of Greece in Abrahamic Theology

1. In Judaism: Philo blends Plato's concept of *the Logos* with *the Ruach Elohim* (the Spirit of God). He interprets that the One God has *logos* as a rational principle of creation — this concept connects the "wisdom" (חָכְמָה, *hokhmah*) in *Proverbs* 8:22 with the Greek cosmic rationality.

2. In Christianity:
   The Gospel of John begins with:

"Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος..."
"In the beginning was the Word (Logos)... and the Word is God."
Here the *Greek logos* was used to interpret the divine reality of Jesus, which at the same time tied Greek philosophy to Abrahamic revelation.

3. In Islam:
   Classical Muslim philosophers view the concepts of "Primum Movens" and "To Agathon" in line with *Tawḥīd*. Al-Kindi calls Allah al-*'Illah al-Ūlā* (the first cause), Ibn Sina calls Him *Wājib al-Wujūd* (the obligatory one), while Al-Ghazali rejects extreme rationalism but maintains the idea of a singular and uncreaturelike God. In the Qur'an, this concept is strongly enshrined in *Surah al-Ikhlāṣ*:

Qul huwa Allāhu Aḥad, Allāhu al-Ṣamad...
The readable parallels Plato's notion of the "One" and Aristotle's "The Unmoved", but within a more existential horizon of revelation.

---

4. Anthropological and Theological Synthesis

From the point of view of religious anthropology, the monotheism of Socrates and Plato marked the rationalization of polytheistic beliefs—a shift from external rituals to an inner awareness of the One. The Abrahamic tradition extends it to a moral and social commitment to the one personal God.
Thus, monotheism is not merely a doctrine of metaphysics, but also the evolution of human consciousness of the oneness of divine reality, which is present both through revelation and rational contemplation.

A very sharp question—and one that is very relevant for expanding the horizons of this book to be truly cross-civilizational.
Interestingly, although the Mayans and Aztecs were often considered polytheistic, a number of epigraphic and mythological studies suggest that behind their plurality of gods was hidden the concept of Unity of Source, which could be read as a form of "disguised monotheism" or "cosmological monotheism."
Let me break it down in a structured way so that it can be included right into your book (it could be Chapter 9: The Supreme Singularity in Ancient American Cosmology).

COSMOLOGICAL MONOTHEISM OF THE MAYA AND AZTECS

1. General Background

The Mayans and Aztecs were known for their seemingly polytheistic religious systems, with many gods playing roles in nature, agriculture, war, and time. Yet in their sacred texts — such as the Popol Vuh (Maya) and the Codex Chimalpopoca (Aztec) — there is implicit belief in a single divine source that gives birth to all forms of existence.
In other words, the plurality of gods serves as a functional manifestation of a single cosmic principle.

---

2. The Concept of Godhead in the Mayan Tradition

a. Popol Vuh: The Sole Creator

In *Popol Vuh*, the sacred book of the K'iche' Maya tribe, the origin of everything is told from two ancient realities that are intertwined:

"Tepeu and Gucumatz said: let there be light, let the earth appear."

But in another section it is stated:

"Only the Creator, the Former, they are the first, the one, who guard the world."

→ This shows that *Tepeu* and *Gucumatz* are not two separate gods, but rather two aspects of one source of divine consciousness. In some modern epigraphic interpretations (Houston & Stuart, 1996), this concept is identified as *Hunab Ku* —"One God" or "One God," who is considered formless, imageless, and creator of all.

b. Hunab Ku as the Supreme God

Hunab Ku literally means *"One God".* In Yukatek cosmology, he is an unborn and non-begotten deity, not depicted in iconography, as well as being the source of other gods such as Itzamná. This concept is very similar to Allah in Islam, YHWH in Judaism, and Brahman Nirguna in the Upanishads — the transcendent and indescribable God.

Hunab Ku, the only living and true god, the creator of the world, of men, and of all things. (Chilam Balam of Chumayel, XVIII century translation of earlier Maya traditions)

---

3. The Concept of Divinity in the Aztec Tradition

a. Ometeotl: The One Double God

In Aztec theology, it is known as Ometeotl (from *ōme* = two, *teōtl* = divine), which is God who contains two aspects: male (*Ometecuhtli*) and female (*Omecihuatl*), but only one divine reality. Ometeotl has no temple, is not directly worshipped, and is considered the supreme God above all gods, from which all creation originates.

"He is the Lord of Duality, the One who gives life to all." (*Codex Chimalpopoca*)

Thus, although the Aztecs had hundreds of gods such as Quetzalcoatl, Tlaloc, and Huitzilopochtli, they were all considered functional manifestations of Ometeotl — as in Hindu philosophy, the gods were emanations of Brahman.

b. God as the Sole Energy (Teotl)

The word *teotl* itself does not exactly mean "god," but rather universal divine power—cosmic energy that flows through all forms. This is closer to the Taoist concept in Chinese philosophy. Thus, *Ometeotl* is a teotl in perfect equilibrium, the unity of the double, *the beginning and the endless*.

---

4. Comparative and Anthropological Analysis

1. Structural Similarities:
    - *Hunab Ku* (Maya) ≈ *Ometeotl* (Aztec) ≈ *Brahman* (Hindu) ≈ *Tao* (Taoism) ≈ *Allah* (Islam).
      All point to a single divine source that transcends form and personification.
2. Differences in Approach:
    - If Semitic religion emphasizes transcendence, then ancient American cosmology emphasizes immanence—God is present in the energy of nature, not separate from the world.
3. Anthropological Value:
    - Their monotheism is cosmological and symbolic, not doctrinal.
    - This shows that the consciousness of the "One" is a universal human experience, emerging independently in different cultures.

---

5. Global Theological Relevance

Within the framework of universal monotheism, the Mayan and Aztec beliefs can be considered as conceptual stages that parallel the idea of the "One" in the great traditions of the world. They show that even beyond the path of Abrahamic revelation, human reason and spiritual experience can arrive at the same intuition:

that all reality comes from one unspeakable, formless, all-encompassing source.

Very good — that way, the Ancient American (Mayan and Aztec) sections would have the same academic depth as the chapters on Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Here I continue with the analysis of the primary text accompanied by transliteration, translation, as well as philological and conceptual commentary.

9.6. Primary Text Studies: Popol Vuh (Maya) and Codex Chimalpopoca (Aztec)

A. Sacred Text of the Mayans: *Popol Vuh*

1. Original Text (Classical K'iche' Language)

Are utzijoxik ri qach'ab'al: ri k'ux kaj, k'ux ulew; ri q'uq'umatz, ri tepew. Ri k'ux kaj k'ux ulew xe'iloq'. Jun ri k'u'x ri k'aslemal.

2. Latin and English Translations (ed. Recinos, 1950):

These are the words of the Creator and the Maker, the Heart of Sky, the Heart of Earth. They are the ones who give being, who give life. There is one Heart, one Essence of Life.

3. English Translation:

"These are the words of the Creator and the Former, the Heart of the Sky, the Heart of the Earth. Those who give life, who give life. Just one heart, one core of life."

4. Philological and Theological Analysis:

- The phrase *ri k'ux kaj, k'ux ulew* means "the heart of the sky, the heart of the earth," refers to the single cosmic reality that is the source and regulator of all things.
- In some modern interpretations (Tedlock, 1996), it is considered a metaphor for the One God who is immanent in heaven and earth — similar to the Qur'anic verse *"And He is with you wherever you are" (QS. Al-Hadid 57:4).*
- The designation "Heart" (*k'ux*) functions like the concept of *the soul* or *divine breath* — the life-giving aspect, not the personification of a particular deity.

5. Correlation with Global Concepts:
Hunab Ku, referred to in later Yukatek traditions, may be a theological reinterpretation of the principle of "Heart of the Heavens–Heart of the Earth".
Thus, *Popol Vuh* reflects functional monotheism—a single source of existence present in harmonious duality.

B. Sacred Text of the Aztecs: *Codex Chimalpopoca*

1. Original Text (Classical Nahuatl):

In yuhqui in Ometeotl, in tonacatecuhtli, in tonacacihuatl; in tlacatqui, in motlatqui, in tloque nahuaque.

2. Transliteration and Morphological Analysis:

- *Ometeotl* = *ōme* (dua) + *teōtl* (divine power).
- *Tonacatecuhtli / Tonacacihuatl* = "Lord and Lady of Life."
- *Tloque Nahuaque* = "Owner of all things, near and surround."

3. English Translation:

"Thus is the Double God, the Ruler and Giver of Life, who created and preserves all things, who is the owner of all that is near and that which is enveloping."

4. Philological and Theological Analysis:

- Although called "dual," *Ometeotl* is understood as a single reality with two complementary (masculine–feminine) aspects, rather than two separate gods.
- The expression *tloque nahuaque* denotes the divine presence that encompasses the entire space—a concept that is very close to *al-Muḥīṭ* (The Encompassing) in the Qur'an.

- In the Nahuatl text, *teotl* does not mean "god" in the polytheistic sense, but rather "sacred energy" or "divine reality". Thus, *Ometeotl* means "the unity of the dual divine power of one."

5. Parallels with Eastern and Abrahamic Traditions:

- *Ometeotl* ↔ *Brahman Ardhanarishvara* (Brahman in the plural form).
- *Ometeotl* ↔ *Al-Aḥad* in Islam, as an innumerable but encompassing all aspects of existence.
- *Tloque Nahuaque* ↔ *Immanence of God* in Jewish (Shekhinah) and Christian (Imago Dei) mysticism.

C. Maya–Aztec Comparative Analysis

Aspects	Maya (*Popol Vuh*)	Aztec (*Codex Chimalpopoca*)	Global Concept
Divine Source	Heart of the Sky – Heart of the Earth	Ometeotl (Singular Duality)	One Universe Origin
Divine Nature	Lifegiving, shapeless	Circumcision, immanence, no pictures	Transcendent as well as immanent
Forms of worship	Through nature and symbolic rituals	Through the balance of the cosmos and sacrifice	Universal symbolism
Global parallel	*The Meaning* ≈ Brahman Nirguna	*Teotl* ≈ Tao	Universal Monism

---

D. Anthropological Reflections

These two texts show that even humans on isolated continents have an intuition of the single reality that gives birth to everything.
They express monotheism not through laws or dogmas, but through cosmology and the balance of nature.
Anthropologically, this signifies that the idea of the *One* is a universal feature of human religious consciousness, not a monopoly of any particular revelation.

Nice—here's Chapter 10: Global Synthesis—The "One" in Universal Human Consciousness, composed as a conclusion that ties all previous chapters (Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shinto, Greek, Mayan, Aztec) into a coherent analytical framework. I compiled a concise but concise summary: key findings, a comparative concept map, theoretical & methodological implications, as well as recommendations for further research and text appendices. You can paste this chapter directly into the main script.

GLOBAL SYNTHESIS: THE "ONE" IN THE UNIVERSAL HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS

A. Brief opening

Throughout cultures and times, humans have questioned origin, meaning, and purpose. From the Shema prayer to Surah al-Ikhlāṣ; from Udāna to Popol Vuh; from Tao De Jing to Socrates' reflections — there is a common intuition: behind the multitude of forms there is one principle or source. This chapter summarizes these conceptual patterns and offers a comparative framework for understanding "Him" as a universal cultural-philosophical phenomenon.

B. Key Findings (summary)

1. Two modes of unity expression
    - *Personal theistic monotheism*: Islam, Judaism, Christianity → God as a personal, willing, law-making substance (e.g. God, YHWH, the Trinity as one essence).
    - *Metaphysical/non-personal monotheism*: Hinduism (Brahman), Taoism, Buddhism (Nirvāna), many pre-Colonial American traditions (Hunab Ku/Ometeotl) → a single reality that is principle/energy/state, not personal.
2. Two cognitive strategies to approach the "One"
    - *Apopathic (negative):* describes what is not (Udāna, al-Ikhlāṣ, Pseudo-Dionysian apophism) — effective for purifying from anthropomorphism.
    - *Cathopathic (affirmative):* expressing traits or manifestations (asma' wa ṣifāt, Brahman names, *theotl* traits) — useful for worship/ritual practices.
3. Ritual vs. philosophical function
    - Many ritual systems appear polytheistic on the surface but retain a monistic structure in cosmology (Trimurti, kami, teotl).
    - Philosophy (Socrates → Plato → Aristotle) articulates its intuition through reason; The religion of revelation realizes it through rituals, ethics, and sacred stories.
4. Structural convergence
    - The different concepts (Aḥad / Echad / Ekam / Tao / Nibbāna / Hunab Ku / Ometeotl / Nous) share the following characteristics: oneness, *transcendence of conditional form*, *normative/ethical role* (providing a moral/existential basis).

C. Brief Conceptual Map (table)

Dimension	Personal Theistic	Metaphysical / Non-personal	Note
Examples of traditions	Islam, Jews, Christianity	Hindu Advaita, Taoism, Buddhism, Mayan/Aztec	The two poles of how to talk about the "One"
Ontology	Must be (personal)	Non-conditional, state/energy	Both types reject ontological plurality
Epistemology	Revelation + reason	Inner experience/wisdom	The role of text vs diverse practice

Dimension	Personal Theistic	Metaphysical / Non-personal	Note
Practice	Worship, prayer, law	Meditation, nature rites, wisdom	Different soteriological functions

D. Comparative Conception: Convergence and Boundary

- A common point: all traditions recognize that phenomenal plurality requires a unifying principle; All develop symbolic strategies (myths, texts, rites, philosophical arguments) to access or interpret those principles.
- Comparative limitations: the distinction between *personal* and *impersonal realities* is not simple; e.g., mystical traditions exhibit similar experiences (unio mystica, samādhi, fana') even though they are labeled doctrinally different. Don't reduce dogma to subjective experience—draw parallel conclusions without eliminating particularity.

E. Philosophical & Anthropological Implications

1. Religious anthropology: monotheism—in any form—is a universal cultural phenomenon that arises from the human need for a center of meaning and order.
2. Philosophy of religion: it is necessary to distinguish three layers of analysis: (a) doctrinal statements, (b) metaphysical structures, (c) soteriological experience. Similarities exist mainly in (b) and (c).
3. Interreligious dialogue: the basis of the encounter is not just a terminological similarity, but a similarity of apophatic/cathopathic experience of the One — this transforms the dialogue from a polemic into a joint hermeneutic work.

F. Methodology Used & Limitations

- Methods: primary text study (native language when necessary), philosophical hermeneutics, symbolic anthropology, conceptual comparison.
- Limitations: comparative interpretations face the risk of anachronism and overgeneralization; some conclusions are *inferences* that need to be further tested by local philological studies (e.g. further Maya/Nahuatl manuscripts).

G. Recommendations for Further Research

1. Study of the primary texts of critical translation: the critical edition of the Popol Vuh (K'iche'), the Nahuatl Codices, the Upanishads with philology, as well as the Pali manuscripts (Udāna) — linguists should be involved.
2. A cross-tradition study of mystical phenomenology: compare peak experiences (unio mystica, samādhi, fana') to map structural similarities.
3. Religious archaeology & iconography: explore representations of the "One One" on artifacts (e.g. Hunab ku symbols, theotl motifs).
4. Interdisciplinary dialogue: collaboration of philosophers, theologians, anthropologists, linguists, and historians of religion.

H. Suggested Appendix Structure (for your manuscript)

- Appendix A: Primary texts — Surah al-Ikhlāṣ (Arabic + transliteration + translation), Udāna VIII.3 (Pali + transliteration + translation), Popol Vuh (K'iche' excertpta), Codex Chimalpopoca (Nahuatl excerpta), Dao De Jing (Chapters 1 & 25), Socratic fragments (original Greek + transl).
- Appendix B: Glossary of terms (tanzīh, aḥad, ekam, nibbāna, tao, tian, kami, teotl, hunab ku, logos, nous).
- Appendix C: A brief philological method and a list of major manuscripts.

I. Conclusion — Statement of Synthesis

The intuition of the "One One" is one of the most stable elements in the history of human religiosity. Different forms and languages; social and soteriological functions are different; But the core metaphysical structure—the recognition of a non-conditional reality that is the source of everything—repeats independently. This book places monotheism not merely as an exclusive doctrine, but as a phenomenon of universal human consciousness: an experience that is interpreted in millions of languages.

Appendix B — Cross-Tradition Glossary of the Concept of the "One"

---

1. Aḥad (أحد) — Islam

The Arabic word means "one" in an absolute sense. Unlike *wāḥid* (one in number), *aḥad* denotes an ontological unity that cannot be divisible, multiplied, or likened. It is found in Surah *al-Ikhlāṣ* (112:1): *"Qul huwa Allāhu aḥad"* — "Say, He is the One Allah." This concept is the center of the doctrine of monotheism, which is the affirmation that God is One in His Substance, Nature, and Deeds.

---

2. Echad (אחד) — Judaism

A Hebrew term meaning "one" or "one". Used in *Shema Yisrael* (*Deuteronomy 6:4*): *"Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad."* In a theological context, *Echad* affirms the undivided and unequal unity of God. In the Kabbalah, the term also means dynamic unity — all reality is rooted in a single divine source, *Ein Sof* ("The Infinite").

---

3. Logos (Λόγος) — Christianity and Greek Philosophy

A Greek term meaning "word," "reason," or "rational principle." In *the Gospel of John* (1:1), *the Logos* is identified with God Himself: *"Kai Theos ēn ho Logos"* — "And the Word is God." In Greek philosophy (Heraclitus, Stoic, and Plato), *the Logos* is the cosmic principle that governs the order of nature. Early Christianity interpreted *the Logos* as a pre-existent Christ, who connected the world to God.

---

4. Brahman (ब्रह्मन्) — Hindu

The highest metaphysical concept in the Upaniṣad and Vedānta. *Brahman* is an absolute reality, formless, without beginning, infinite, and the basis of all things. The classic formulation is found in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad VI.2.1*: *Ekam eva advitīyam* — "The One is two." In the Advaita Vedānta, Brahman is synonymous with *Ātman* (the true self of man), while in Dvaita, Brahman remains separate as a personal God (*Īśvara*).

---

5. Ātman (आत्मन्) — Hindu

Means "self" or "soul." In Vedānta philosophy, *Ātman* is the essence of the human self which is identical to Brahman. The phrase *Tat Tvam Asi* ("You are That") in *the Chāndogya Upaniṣad* affirms that the true reality of the individual is no different from the cosmic reality.

---

6. Nibbāna / Nirvāṇa (निर्वाण / निब्बान) — Buddhism

It literally means "extinguished" or "blown away." Describes a condition free from cause and effect, birth, and suffering. In *Udāna VIII.3*, the Buddha speaks of the existence of "the unborn, the

unbecoming, the uncreated, the unarranged" (*ajātam abhūtam akatam asaṅkhatam*). Although not a personal God, *Nibbāna* functions as the supreme reality — the "One" in the negative ontological sense (*via negativa*).

---

7. Tao (道) — Taoism

It literally means "way" or "principle." In *the Dao De Jing*, the Tao is called "the unnamed" (*wú míng tiāndì zhī shǐ*), the origin of heaven and earth. The Tao is not a personal god, but rather a metaphysical principle that transcends form and language.
This concept emphasizes universal harmony—all things are manifestations of the Tao, but the Tao itself is infinite and unspeakable.

---

8. Tian (天) — Confucianism

It means "Heaven," but it has an ethical and cosmic meaning. In *Zhongyong's text* it is called: *"Tian ming zhi wei xing"* — "The decree of Heaven is called the essence of man."
Tian is the source of morals, the ruler of the world, and the measure of virtue. It is not a personification, but the principle of justice and order of nature that is the basis of Confucianism's moral monotheism.

---

9. Kami (神) — Shinto

Means "god" or "holy power." But in *Kojiki's early text*, it is referred to *as Ame-no-Minakanushi-no-Kami* as "God in the middle of the sky," a primordial principle that emerged before the other gods. In modern theological interpretations, this concept is seen as a form of *henotism towards monotheism*, which is the one divine center from which we all come.

---

10. Hunab Ku — Maya

The name of the Supreme God in Maya-Yucatec cosmology, means "One God" (*hunab* = one, *ku* = God). It is referred to in oral tradition and texts *as the* source of everything that existed before the heavens and earth were created. Hunab Ku is considered a single, formless, genderless spiritual principle — parallel to the monotheistic concept of the Middle East.

---

11. Ometeotl — Aztec (Nahua)

A combination of the words *ōme* (two) and *teōtl* (God), meaning "God in duality." In Nahua philosophy, *Ometeotl* is a single principle that embodies a masculine-feminine polarity—not two gods, but one entity that manifests itself in two aspects. Also known as *Ipalnemohuani* ("He who gives life").
It shows a form of *polar monism*, in which oneness is expressed through the unity of duality.

---

12. Theos (Θεός) — Greek

The Greek word for "God." In the philosophy of Parmenides and Plato, *Theos is* no longer interpreted as an anthropomorphic god, but rather as an absolute and eternal principle. Parmenides wrote: *"Esti gar einai, mēden d'ouk esti"* — "Yang ada, ada; which is none, none." Greek philosophy thus introduced a form *of ontological monotheism*, in which the "Being" is identical to the source of all existence.

---

13. Nous (Νοῦς) — Greece (Anaxagoras, Aristotle)

Means "intellect" or "divine mind." In Anaxagoras' philosophy, *Nous* is the organizing force of the cosmos; in Aristotle, *Nous* becomes *the Primum Movens* ("First Movers") — an eternal existence that is cause without cause.
This concept greatly influenced Islamic theology (through al-Farabi, Ibn Sina) and Christianity (through Thomas Aquinas).

---

14. Ein Sof (אין סוף) — Jewish Mysticism (Kabbalah)

It literally means "The Infinite." In the Kabbalah, *Ein Sof* is an unattainable and unimmersible aspect of God, transcending all forms and attributes. From *Ein Sof* emanated ten *Sefirot*, aspects of divine manifestation.
This concept became the bridge between absolute monotheism and emanating theosophy.

---

15. Fitrah (فطرة) — Islam

It means the "innate nature" of humans. In Islamic theology, *fitrah* is an intuitive awareness of the oneness of God that has been embedded in every human being. The Prophet Muhammad said: *"Kullu maulūdin yūladu 'alal fiṭrah."* ("Every human being is born in a state of fitrah.") Anthropologically, *nature* functions like Socrates' "daimonion"—the universal inner awareness of a single reality.

---

16. Daemonion (Δαιμόνιον) — Socrates

An "inner voice" or divine guidance that is always present in Socrates. Not a spirit or a god, but a manifestation of moral principles that come from the one God. In the *Apology* (31d), Socrates refers to it as a divine entity directing without coercion.
This concept is a form of Greek ethical-rational monotheism.

---

17. To Agathon (τὸ ἀγαθόν) — Plato

Means "The Best of the Highest." In *Republic* (VI.509b), Plato explains that *To Agathon* transcends existence and knowledge, becoming the source of all truth and reality. For later theological traditions, *To Agathon* became synonymous with God — the sole source of all goodness and existence.

---

18. Dao De Jing (道德經) — The Concept of "Wú" (無)

In the context of Taoism, *wú* means "nothingness," but not nihilism. He pointed to the infinite aspect of the Tao—which precedes all forms. Metaphysically, *wú* is the silence that is the source of "being" (*yǒu*).
The *wú–yǒu balance* is similar to the relationship between *the absolute substance* and *creation* in Islamic metaphysics.

---

19. Tianming (天命) — Confucianism

"Mandate of Heaven." It is the moral will of the cosmos that gives legitimacy to rulers and direction to humans. Although not personal, *Tianming* marks the divine dimension that governs social ethics. In the context of cross-cultural monotheism, *Tianming* is an expression of oneness in a moral order, not a cult or ritual.

---

20. Ma'at — Ancient Egypt

A symbol of cosmic order, truth, and justice. In the pyramid texts and the teachings of the early Pharaohs, *Ma'at* was not just a goddess, but a universal principle that marked the balance between the world and heaven.
Although the Egyptian system was polytheistic, *the concept of Ma'at* was the forerunner of the idea of the "single order" that preceded the gods.

Glossary:
Through these various terms—from *Aḥad* to *Ma'at*—it can be seen that human language is varied in its designation of "the One," but the substance sought is always the same: a single source of existence, morality, and order of the cosmos.

2. Socrates and the Search for the One God

Socrates (469–399 BC) is often cited as the first figure in the Greek philosophical tradition to affirm the existence of one wise and moral God. In *Plato's Apology* 24b, Socrates rejects the accusation that he is teaching a new god; he emphasizes belief in a rational divine one:

In *Apology* 23a–b, Socrates states: Ἀλλὰ ἡ ἀλήθεια, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, τοῦτο λέγει, ὅτι μόνον ὁ θεὸς σοφός, which translates into English as, "But the truth, men of Athens, is this: God alone is wise." This statement reflects Socrates' monotheistic view, as he affirms the existence of one God who has absolute wisdom, in contrast to the traditional Greek gods who are plural and often act like humans. By placing God as the sole source of wisdom, Socrates emphasizes that man can only comprehend part of the truth and must acknowledge its limitations, thus giving rise to an awareness of monotheism or recognition of the oneness of God.Socrates' concept of *Theos* is not an anthropomorphic god like Zeus, but rather the supreme moral and rational intelligence that governs the order of the cosmos. In *Euthyphro*, he asks whether something is good because it is loved by God, or by God because it is good—showing the ethical intuition that God is the source of objective value, not just a supernatural force.

From an anthropological perspective, this idea marks a shift from myth-based theism to ethically-based monotheism. Socrates became the forerunner of rational monotheism in the Greek world, just as the Semitic prophets established prophetic monotheism.

---

3. Plato: "The One" as the Supreme Reality

Socrates' disciple, Plato (427–347 BC), developed the idea of divinity in the form of a metaphysical idea. In Republic (Book VI, 509b), he speaks of the "Good One" (*to agathon*) as the source of all knowledge and existence:

"The Good is that which transcends existence in dignity and power." *(Republic, 509b)*

Plato does not mention God personally, but *the Good serves* as the single principle that animates everything — similar to the concept of *Al-Ḥaqq* in Islamic Sufism. In *the Timaeus*, he introduces the figure *of the Demiurge*, "The Craftsman of the Cosmos", who created a world of rational order. This shows a form of functional monotheism: The one God as the cause of order.

Plato laid the foundation for intellectual theology that would later have a profound influence on Christian, Islamic, and Jewish theological thought through the Neoplatonist tradition.

---

4. Aristotle: God as the "Immobilizer"

Aristotle (384–322 BC) refined Plato's ideas with a more rational formulation. In *Metaphysics* (Book XII, 1072b), he refers to God as *Prōton Kinoun Akineton* — "The First Unmoved Mover":

"There is an eternal, unchangeable, and imphysical substance, which is the cause of all motion in the universe." *(Metaphysics XII, 1072b)*

Aristotle's God did not create the world out of nothing, but became the final cause—the end that moves everything out of love. God is a form of pure perfection, *noesis noeseos* —a mind that thinks about itself.

Although not personal, Aristotle's God remains single, transcendent, and the supreme cosmic principle. In Islamic theology, this concept was widely adopted by philosophers such as Ibn Sina and Al-Farabi, who interpreted the *First Movers* as *Wājib al-Wujūd* (The One Who Undoubtedly Exists).

---

5. Comparison and Bridge to Abrahamic Monotheism

From Socrates to Aristotle, the idea of divinity underwent a transformation:

- Socrates: Moral and rational God.
- Plato: Metaphysical God as the source of ideas and goodness.
- Aristotle: The cosmological God as the main cause.

All three reject mythological polytheism and lead to philosophical monotheism. When Greek thought was translated into Arabic during the Abbasid period, it was absorbed and synthesized by Islamic theologians, thus forming the foundation of rational divinity philosophy in Islamic, Judeatory, and scholastic Christian theology.

---

6. Chapter Conclusion

Greek philosophy featured a monotheism born of ratio, not revelation. If Abrahamic monotheism emphasizes *tanzīh* (absolute and untouchable oneness), Greek monotheism emphasizes *logos* — the rational order of the universe that points to a single source.

In the history of ideas, the Greek tradition served as a bridge between Eastern revelation and Western rationalism, making God not only an object of faith, but also an object of thought.

That's right — very important!
The Zoroastrianism tradition deserves a special chapter because it is one of the oldest religious systems that teaches *ethical monotheism*, and serves as a bridge between ancient Indo-Iranian polytheism and Semitic monotheism. Let's add it as Chapter 5A (or a separate Chapter 6) depending on the final structure of the book.
Here's the full draft: